

11-1956

## Don't Overlook Money-Saving Make-Overs

Opal Roberson  
*Iowa State College*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/farmscience>



Part of the [Agriculture Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Roberson, Opal (1956) "Don't Overlook Money-Saving Make-Overs," *Iowa Farm Science*: Vol. 11 : No. 5 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/farmscience/vol11/iss5/7>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension and Experiment Station Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Iowa Farm Science by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [digirep@iastate.edu](mailto:digirep@iastate.edu).

# Don't Overlook Money-Saving Make-Overs



by Opal Roberson

**T**HIS WINTER a small Iowa boy will romp in the snow in a winter play outfit that ordinarily would cost around \$22.50 on the market. His snowsuit cost \$3.15. The answer: make-overs.

A little girl will go to Sunday School and other dress-up places in her "best" beige coat with velveteen collar and cuffs. Had her parents purchased the coat new on the market, it would have cost around \$35. Actual cost, \$2.95.

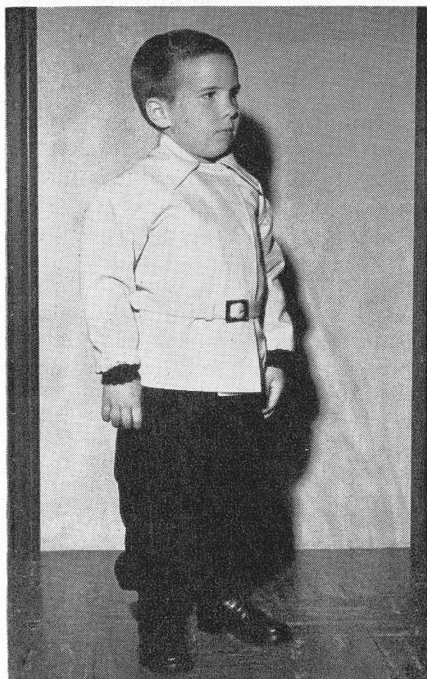
OPAL ROBERSON is associate professor of textiles and clothing.

The story behind the snowsuit is that of a storm coat cast off by its adult owner as completely worn out, and a dark green wool coat which had given 10 years of service. Eleven years of service had been given by the beige coat before its owner discarded it as old and outmoded.

## Usefulness Still There

That there's "life in many an old garment yet" is literally true. For when fabric is beautiful and

durable, that quality is there though dimmed by soil and hard wear. Countless garments which are carelessly put in the back of the closet or sent to rummage sales have years of service left. Today's wise homemaker has two reasons for seeking out these clothes, reconditioning them and making them over for her children. One reason: The high cost of commercially made children's clothes in these days of depressed farm income. A second reason: Fabric in good-quality old clothes



**LEFT:** This snowsuit was made over from two old garments for a total cost of \$3.15. Hand-knitted cuffs for sleeves and legs keep wind out and give a professional look. Commercially knitted cuffs are also available from clothing stores. **CENTER:** This coat came from an 11-year-old adult coat. Wrong side of fabric was used; nap had worn on outer side. Velveteen collar and cuffs give youthful appearance. Buttons were commercially covered for 30 cents; muslin for interlining came from scrapbox. **RIGHT:** This coat provided fabric for snowsuit jacket at left; worn lining was replaced.



**LEFT:** Outmoded green wool coat provided fabric for boy's snowsuit pants. Reconditioning restored fabric's bright appearance. **RIGHT:** Coats such as this old wool garment provide ample material for make-over garments. Avoid thin spots; sometimes reverse fabric to provide good color and nap.



**LEFT:** Total cost of this make-over was \$1.68. Old coat came from rummage sale. Lining of resin-treated cotton was added. New garment would have cost around \$30. **RIGHT:** The many gores in this garment prompted buying a child's coat pattern which also had several gores in the back.

may often be better than that available at moderate prices for yardage. Thus, tremendous savings are possible.

To be sure, old garments lack eye appeal. Yet with intelligent use of fabric, imagination, ingenuity and creativeness in selecting patterns, styles and trims, delightful clothes result. For example, the snowsuit has a green, tan and greyed-orange plaid outing flannel lining. This is for warmth, but also brings a gay note into a small boy's jacket. The lining cost \$2.45 which was the only major cost in the total outfit. The "dress up" lining in the little girl's coat came to \$2.55 and was the main expense.

### What to Look For . . .

Many discarded garments sell at rummage sales for 25c to 50c—seldom higher. Thus, there are genuine bargains. Look at the condition of the fabric in the garment. Check thin spots to see if they can be mended. If the wool nap is worn on the right side, look at the wrong side. Likewise, if the color is faded on the right side, check the wrong side. This may wisely become the outside fabric.

### Recondition Fabric . . .

It's possible to recondition all fabrics at home. Since make-overs are a money-saving idea, you'll want to keep the cost down at every point possible.

1. Rip *all* seams apart. Use scissors or ripper designed for this purpose. Cut threads and pull them out from both sides of the fabric.

2. Brush all lint and dirt from inside hems and folds.

3. Use a solvent to remove all grease and oil.

4. Wash in soft water. If the water is hard, use Calgon or similar nonprecipitating water conditioner and light-duty synthetic detergent. Fold pieces and push water through them—or soak for 5 minutes. Rinse thoroughly. Squeeze water out. Never wring or rub. This felts and shrinks the wool. Roll in a towel to remove excess water. Hang to dry away from direct heat.



5. Press with a steam iron if you have one. With a dry iron, use a slightly dampened cotton cloth under the iron. If you plan to use the wrong side of the fabric, press from the right side. In other words, *press* on the side which you intend to use as the *wrong* side. Press *with* the grain of the fabric.

6. Press all linings and interfacings you intend to use.

7. Save all buttons, snaps, zippers and other findings.

8. Retain buttonholes when possible.

## Pattern Selection . . .

The several pieces from an old garment will need to provide ample material for the new garment. Sometimes two garments may be combined into one good make-over. When you select a pattern, keep these points in mind:

1. Take chest measurements of the child and purchase the correct size pattern accordingly.

2. Keep in mind the number, size and shape of the pieces of the old garment. An old garment with several gores would make up most easily into a child's garment which also has gores. This is because such pieces are narrow and won't provide enough fabric for large pattern sections.

3. A garment without a definite waistline seam is more adaptable to growing children.

## Pattern Layout . . .

Lay out the new pattern on the old fabric as you would if you had new material. Press the pattern pieces out smoothly with a slightly warm iron. Follow the pattern layout on the instruction sheet when you can. Lay out all pieces before you cut any.

Patterns include a uniform seam allowance. Cut exactly along the seam allowance when you can but, with limited fabric, you may not always be able to do this. Know your stitching line.

## That Tailored Look . . .

The fabric may be old, but the garment can look like new. Much depends on how carefully you

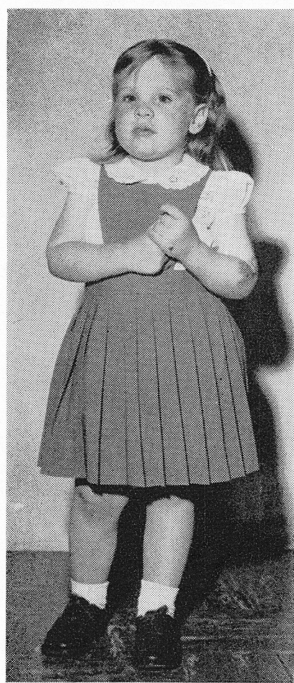
tailor the garment. Treat the fabric as though it were new. Follow the "unit" method of sewing so that you handle each piece as little as possible. The "unit" method means that you work on each section of the garment before you join it to another section.

Press each unit as you work with it. Always press seams open before joining another section. Don't fold the cloth more than necessary, and as soon as the

shoulder and side seams are made, hang the garment up when working on other parts.

If you're not familiar with good methods for fitting sleeves, or of tailoring fabrics, you'll find the publications "Here's How to Tailor," HE-18, and "Set-In Sleeves," HE 7-M, useful. Both may be obtained from your County Extension Office or from the Publications Distribution Room, Morrill Hall, Iowa State College.

**RIGHT: If your farm receipts were down this year so that some penny-pinching is wise, don't neglect make-over possibilities from older garments. Making over made it possible to achieve these garments at a minimum cost.**



This girl has a better garment than could be bought. Fabric of wool would have retailed at \$7 a yard when new. No pattern was needed; length and waistline were only measurements needed for size.



When laying out new patterns on old fabrics, plan for all pieces before cutting. If you can't get full seam allowance, do the best you can. Know where your stitching line is. Follow grainline when laying out pattern.

